The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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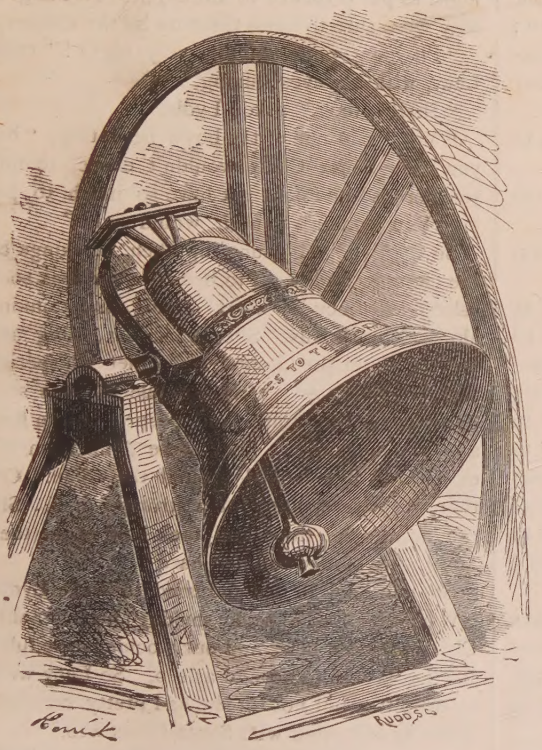


The Christmas Bell.

RING out, O, merry Christmas Bell!
Ring out from your high steeple,
And let your merry music tell,
To high and lowly people —

How Jesus left his home on high,
And passed the pearly portals
Of that fair city in the sky,
And came to dwell with mortals.
How he became a humble babe,
A houseless, homeless stranger.
And on a bed of straw was laid,
And cradled in a manger.

Tell how the holy angels came
Down from the hills of glory,
And to the shepherds on the plain,
Repeated the sweet story.

And how these much astonished men,
Arousing from their tremor,
Hastened away to Bethlehem,
And found the dear Redeemer.

And how, before their Saviour, they
Bowed down in adoration;
Then with the good news sped away
To publish to the nation.

Tell how the wise men saw a star,
The azure vault adorning,
From their watch-towers in land afar,
On the first Christmas morning.

How, guided by the heavenly light
From that fair orb of beauty,
The magi travelled on aright.
In the plain path of duty.

That "Peace on earth and good-will" song
Hath echoed round our planet.
Since o'er the plain the angel throng,
On that first Christmas sang it.

Ring out, O merry, merry Bell!
Ring out in tones of glory,
And to the listening people tell
The blessed, sweet old story.

William D. Worth.

Hark! what means those holy voices
Sweetly sounding through the skies,
Lo, the angelic host rejoices,
Heavenly hallelujahs rise!

Listen to the wondrous story
Which they chant in hymns of joy;
"Glory in the highest, glory,
Glory be to God on high!"

For the Myrtle.

One Christmas.

THERE was once a little girl who had never had a Christmas present, and she was eight years old. This was not because she was a very poor little girl, but because it was not so much the fashion to give Christmas presents as it is now, and then she had no mother to think of her when her birthday and Christmas came around.

But she had three little brothers not much larger than herself. And one of them was fond of reading story-books, and had read all about Santa Claus and his Christmas gifts to children; only he knew that Santa Claus was only a make-believe for kind friends. So he said to the other boys one day,

"If I can earn some money, I am going to have Santa Claus come to Lucy this year."

"What are you going to get her?" asked the other boys.

"Oh, I'm going to get her a little glass pitcher, because that is what she wants the most."

"What a little thing to put in a stocking as big as hers!" cried the other boys. "We'll all help, and perhaps we can fill it up to the brim."

What could they do? The farmers were doing nothing now that they could work at to earn money, and besides, they were going to school. But luckily, the store-keeper asked them one day if they knew that brushes were made of hogs' bristles; and told them that he wanted to get some bunches of the best bristles to send away to a factory to make brushes.

"Now," said the store-keeper, "if you boys will gather up some of the longest bristles and put them up in bunches two inches round, I will pay you two cents apiece for the bunches, in things out of the store."

This was nothing but play for the little boys and they were very glad to do it. So when the pork-packing for the winter was done, they followed the butchers about, and learned from them what were the best bristles to save for brushes. The bristles after having been scalded were scraped off and left in little clean heaps on the snow; and the boys would go in the morning before school, pick out what they wanted to save and take them home. Then in the evening they would put them up in the packages. Lucy wondered what they were working so busily about in the back-kitchen when the rest of the family were in the sitting-room, but they would not let her know.

Before Christmas they had more than fifty bunches to sell. The housekeeper had also become interested in it, and she suggested to Lucy's father that he should get her new winter things for Christmas, and he thought he would.

Christmas eve came. Lucy had her little friend Lydia staying with her, and the children had a very merry evening together with nuts and apples and pop-corn, and playing funny games. Then the boys told stories about Santa Claus and how he came down the chimney Christmas night to put presents in little girls' stockings if they were sure to hang them up by the chimney.

"I'll hang mine up this very night!" cried Lucy, with her eyes shining.

"Shall I, too?" asked Lydia.

"Yes," said one of the boys, hesitating, "but you know Santa Claus wouldn't expect to find you here, so he might not have so much to put in. You wouldn't mind it, would you?"

So the two girls hung up their stockings by the chimney and went to bed. Lydia was soon asleep, but Lucy lay awake a long time thinking about Santa Claus. She heard a rustling and moving about the kitchen and quiet whispering and laughing, and after a while all was still. Then she got up softly and peeped out to look after the stockings. They were gone from the chimney! She looked around the room. Oh, there they were, hung on a stronger nail. She ran across the floor and took hold of the toes. They were stuffed full and hard!

She ran back to bed and tried to wake Lydia. "Wake up," she said, shaking her, "Santa Claus *has* been here, and our stockings are full." But Lydia was too sound asleep. So Lucy went to sleep too, but not till she had pretty certainly made up her mind who Santa Claus was.

The next morning they were up before light, and it seemed as though the boys never would come down. There hung the stockings high and full. A large package was on the nail with Lucy's, but she didn't think about that. They could only stand off and gaze at them and wonder.

"Why don't you take them down, silliness," said the housekeeper to Lucy, laughing.

"Oh, I kind of—don't dare to—" said Lucy. "I want the boys to come and help."

The boys came, but they made Lucy climb up and take the stockings down. They looked in Lydia's first, and it had first a big red apple, then an orange, and all the rest full of candy. Lydia was very happy.

Then Lucy began to take little packages carefully out of hers. She unrolled one; the glass pitcher! Her heart fairly stood still. What was the next? A lovely little glass goblet! then glass plates, a bowl, a little soup-tureen and cover and salver all of glass yellow as gold. Then a blue box with gold bands and a mirror in the cover. Then a string of beads. And down in the bottom a paper of candy like Lydia's.

The boys waited to see what Lucy was going to say. They thought she would cry she was so overjoyed. But the first thing she said was,

"Oh, Lydia, I wish you had every one just the same!"

"Oh, I don't care," said Lydia, bravely. "Santa Claus knew I didn't belong here, you know, and he gave me ever so much the most candy."

"Perhaps he'll bring you more things when you get home," said the boys.

"Oh yes," cried Lucy, "you can hang your stocking up New Years' night."

"So I will," said Lydia, "and perhaps I shall have nicer things than you when he comes down *my* chimney."

They set all the glass dishes in a row and the blue box with them, and Lydia tied the beads round Lucy's neck.

"Why don't you take down the rest of it?" said the housekeeper at last, pointing to the bundle.

"Why, is that mine, *too?*" cried Lucy in astonishment; and then she climbed up and pulled down the bundle. She flew for the shears and cut the string; and lo, there was some soft green cashmere for a dress, and a bright plaid ribbon for a sash.

This was a surprise to the boys too, and they thought Lucy had a Christmas indeed.

"I guess there is a papa Santa Claus, too," cried Lucy, gaily; and they knew she was not fooled about Santa Claus.

Lucy set her pretty glass-ware up on the top of her little bureau; and she called the blue box her jewel-box, though she had only one little gold pin to keep in it.

As for Lydia, she *did* hang her stocking up on New Years' night. And she had told such an eager story about Lucy's presents that she had as many pretty things as Lucy did.

And all this delight came from one little boy's loving thought for his sister.

H. A. B.

For the Myrtle.

Reflections in my Garden.

ONLY a few short weeks ago,
The place was sweet and fair;
But now the ground is white with snow,
And chilly is the air.

Just like a robber in the night,
Jack Frost with silent tread,
Has come and breathed upon my flowers,
And now they all are dead.

The bees and butterflies are gone,
I hear no birdies sing,
They'll linger in the sunny south,
Till the return of Spring.

But soon the holidays will come,
There's happiness in store,
When in my quiet, cozy room,
I'll count my treasures o'er.

The winter's bright and beautiful,
I love the frost and snow,
The sunshine warm, the moonbeam's pall,
The cheerful firelight's glow.

And then beside the study lamp,
We'll con our lessons o'er;
And with the children of the poor
We'll joy to share our store.

And though the wintry storms may rage
And skies are dull and gray,
We'll carry sunshine in our hearts,
And cheer the lonely way.

Not like a flaunting, useless weed,
Should our religion be;
But like a fair and fragrant flower,
Or ever fruitful tree.

A. S. T.

The Christmas Tree.

This tree is a symbol of the tree of life, mentioned in Rev. xxii. 2. Its greenness is the symbol of everlasting life through Christ. Its candles represent the true Light which lighteth every man. Its gifts remind us of the great Gift of God, our Saviour, and all His blessed benefits. Without the Light, all is darkness; without this Gift, all is misery and death.

"THE righteous shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in due season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

For the Myrtle.

What I saw on Washington Street.

The day before Christmas I walked up the street,
To see what new wonders my fancy would meet.
But it seemed there'd be nothing to see or to say
For the rush of fine people that crowded the way.
They jostled me le ftand they jostled me right;
They stood by the windows and hid them from sight;
There were women in furs with their parcels and bags,
And men in big overcoats, laden like nags,
And children with arms-full of bundles to hold
And pockets stuffed out as with millions of gold.
You'd have thought the whole city was moving away,
And must buy all the goods of a lifetime to-day.

But I slipped to the windows and elbowed along
So up street I drifted as drifted the throng,
And I found that inside there was nothing to miss
Though the trade were a hundred times brisker than this.
And the windows were framed in their Christmas green
With arches and crosses and stars between,
While the man in the street with his evergreen stall
Drove the very merriest trade of all.

There were books as if book-making never had end;
Books with cloth pages to tear up or lend,
Mother Goose picture-books, volumes of rhymes,
All the new stories and tales of the times.
Travels and wonders by sea and by land,
Big parlor-table books gilded and grand
Chromos and portraits and pictures gay —
You could stay by these windows and look for a day.

All the fine garments that ever were made,
Models in all the new fashions arrayed;
Models of boys in their jackets and boots;
Models of girls in their pretty street-suits;
Shawls and sacques and mantles and wraps,
Muffs and tippets and mittens and caps,
Gloves and neckties, laces and flowers,
Feathers, ribbons and beads in showers;
Fans, handkerchiefs, bracelets, chains,
Belts and buckles and *chatelaines*,
Gorgeous patterns in worsted work
Slippers and smoking caps fit for a Turk

There was hair in curls and switches and braids,
Combs and brushes and fine pomades,
Perfumes and powders and toilet setts,
Vases and bronzes and statuettes.
Clocks of largest and tiniest mold,
Plate of silver and jewels of gold.

There were pens and pencils and boxes of paint,
Pocket-books, paper-weights, inkhorns quaint,
Shawl-straps, shopping-bags, diaries, rules:
Knives and scissors and sets of tools.

And then the toys, — but I quite despair
Of telling you all the wonders there.
There were skates and sleds and balls and games,
Curious puzzles with puzzling names;
Carts and carriages, horses and whips,
Guns and soldiers, steamers and ships;
Villages — houses and streets and parks, —
Jacks-in-boxes, and Noah's arks.
Dogs and kittens and cows and sheep,
Beasts that growl and birds that peep,
Dolls of every form and guise,
Dolls that open and shut their eyes,
Dolls that walk, and cry with spunk,
Dolls with a Saratoga trunk.
Waxen dolls with "truly" hair,
Chubby dolls of earthern-ware.
Dolls all ready for church or ball,
Dolls with nothing to wear at all.

Neat doll-kitchens and all within,
Sets of china and sets of tin,
Chairs and tables, cradles and beds, —
All things ready for hands and heads
To play at life's game, grave and wise,
With all the world in a smaller size.

And then all the plentiful things to eat!
From Christmas turkeys and joints of meat,
To the baker's window with bread in tons,
Pies and puddings and cakes and buns;
Nuts and raisins, apples and grapes,
Crystal sweets in a thousand shapes;
Candy-boxes and cundy-jars,
Candy in kisses and drops and bars,
Candy in heaps, till you long to know
Wherever does all the candy go.

There were Christmas trees both large and small,
With colored candles short and tall,
And Santa Claus with his eyes like sparks,
And long white beard like a patriarch's.

But the prettiest thing is still to be told
That every window a wish should hold, —
In card or motto or leaves of green
Always the same two words were seen;
Two words that like voices seemed to call,
A "Merry Christmas" to one and all.

H. A. B.

For the Myrtle.

Recitation for Christmas.

FOR GIRLS AND BOYS.

[Three of the largest scholars go on to the platform together, one of whom carries a banner, white ground, trimmed with evergreen, and which has on it in large gilt letters, Good News.]

First scholar says, "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is *good news* from a far country."

Three together. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will to men."

Second Scholar. "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

Third Scholar. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Choir sing:

"Hark! the herald-angels sing."

[Then let sixteen of the smallest scholars go on the platform and arrange themselves in a semi-circle, eight on the right, and eight on the left of the three large scholars.]

First. Christ is called our Captain. *Heb.* ii. 10. "For it became him, for whom are all

things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

Second. He is called our High Priest. *Heb.* ix. 11, 12. "But Christ benig come, a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Third. He is called a Rock. 1 *Cor.* x. 4. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

Fourth. He is called the Image of God. *Heb.* i. 3. "Who having the brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Fifth. He calls himself the good Shepherd. John x. 14. "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."

Singing. (*Melodist.*)

"Jesus is our Shepherd."

Sixth. He is called Teacher. *John* iii. 2. "Nicodemus said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.

Seventh. He is called the Only Begotten. *John* i. 14. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Eighth. He is said to be Unchangeable. *Heb.* xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

Ninth He calls himself the Resurrection. *John* xi. 25. "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Tenth. He is called the Sun of Righteousness. *Matt.* iv. 2. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

Eleventh. He is called our Advocate. 1 John ii. 1. "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Twelfth. He calls himself a Vine. *John* xv. 1. "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

Thirteenth. He brought Immortality to light. 2 *Tim.* i. 10. "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and Immortality to light through the gospel."

Fourteenth. He taught us to say Our Father.

All in concert repeat the Lord's prayer.

Fifteenth. He has given us Understanding. 1 *John* v. 20. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding, that we may know him that is true."

Sixteen. He is called our Ransom. 1 *Tim.* ii. 6. "Who gave himself a Ransom for all to be testified in due time."

Singing:

First large scholar:

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth!

All together. Come and worship, worship Christ the new born King.

Second large scholar:

O ye beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,—
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing.

All together. Peace on earth, good will to men.

Third large scholar:

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace their King.
And the whole world send back the song
Which *now* the angels sing.

All together. Peace on earth, good will to men.

[Scholars remain on platform while the whole school join in singing. *Melodist*, page 26]

Then all together. Peace on earth, good will to men. [Retire.]

ARRANGEMENTS. — Let an arch, white ground, bordered with evergreen, with pegs inserted at suitable distances, be erected at the back of the platform. Let each of the small scholars be provided with the *initial* letter of the prominent word in their verse. The letters should be of pasteboard, covered with gilt paper and large enough to be distinctly seen from every part of the house. As each recites the verse, let him pass the letter to the Superintendent who will place them on the pegs, so that they will make

CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR.

Christmas Address.

INTRODUCTORY TO A CHRISTMAS S. S. EXHIBITION.

It is a story told ten thousand times,
Of the angel band from the heavenly climes,
Chanting of Him who had come to fill
All hearts with God's love, all earth with good will.

'Tis a story old, yet ever as new,
Of the star that blazed in the arch of blue,
Telling the Magi of the child just born —
Himself the bright-shining "Star of the Morn."

That story has called us here to-night;
For it gives to our souls a pure delight
To rehearse the praise of our Saviour King,
And together his name and glories sing.

We have heard his truth through the year now past,
As Sabbaths have come and fled so fast;
We have learned of his grace, and felt it too,
In our school baptized with the heavenly dew.

And now we come, that what you have read, —
The blessing of Christ on the children shed, —
May prove to be more than a story told
Of a scene in Judah in days of old.

He blesses us now, he blesses us here,
And lights up all life with those words of cheer; —
"The Father of all reigns ever the same;
The Father loves all — have faith in his name."

(*Kneeling.*)

O Father Almighty! be with us to-night;
With beams of that day-star illumine our sight;
And, "infants in Christ" though yet we may be,
Help us each, through his grace, to come unto Thee.

C. W. Tomlinson.

"Saint Nicholas."

TO BE SPOKEN AT THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

Each year, about the holidays,
Our ancient friend, St. Nicholas,
Comes round with many pretty things
With which to please and tickle us.

And that he's been around again,
'Tis very plain to see;
And gifts for all, both great and small,
He's hung upon this tree.

I often wonder where he gets
His presents and his trees,
And how it is he knows so well
Just what each child will please.

Some say the story of Old Nick
Is nothing but a myth;
A silly narrative, got up
To fool us children with.

But be that as it may, we know
These gifts are not ideal,
We touch them, taste them, handle them,
And find them rich and real.

And while it is his pleasure thus
Our Sunday Schools to bless,
Long life to the old saint, and may
His shadow not grow less.

And when he comes around again,
And plants another tree,
And makes it bear such precious fruit,
May we be there to see.

J. Perry Elliott.

Our Sunday Schools.

OHIO.

— Pres. McCollester has been lecturing before his young students of Buchtel on the "Duties, Helps and Rewards of the Young." It is a subject on which a great deal may be said, and he did not fail to say it.

MARYLAND.

— The young people of the church and Sunday School at Baltimore open the season prosperously in their vestry. A literary entertainment was lately given, in which readings, recitations, and piano and vocal music alternated making a fine programme. The children in chorus sang several pieces with fine effect.

INDIANA.

— The Walton church with preaching a quarter of the time, maintains a Sunday School.

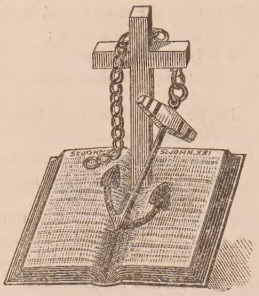
— The Dayton church has preaching one-half the time, and a live and prosperous Sunday School.

— The Logansport parish "has held together through its Sunday School." The average attendance is forty members, with five teachers. That is too many scholars to a teacher, we think. The MYRTLE and *Guiding Star* are both taken.

— A friend writes from Dublin, that he thinks the cause is prospering finely there because they have preaching by Rev. T. S. Guthrie once a month on week-day evenings! But that is not the whole of it. He adds, "We have a very good and interesting Sunday School. Bro. J. B. McGrew is Superintendent. And also a very interesting Bible class that meets once a week. which is conducted by our worthy brother, H. N. Brown." It is these home workers who make the cause prosperous.

ILLINOIS.

— Earlville has an excellent Sunday School, with Miss Sarah Burlingame as chief worker. With no pastor this little school is kept together and in working order, Miss Burlingame acting as librarian and assistant superintendent. An eye-witness of the school writes: "I looked on with a great deal of astonishment, and pleasure of course, as the children gathered around the organ to sing. They sang as though they had not started out to drop off in a few weeks, but as though they were going right on in the even tenor of their way, until they were able to call a pastor. I think the spirits of their pastors must linger around them still. May the Lord bless and prosper them."



A Christmas Service.

[*The questions may be asked by the Superintendent or pastor, and the replies given by the several classes. If there are not classes enough to give the replies, some of them may give two.*]

Sup't. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and the scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born?

Class 1. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet,

And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Sup't. Who inquired for him?

Class 2. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

Sup't. Who watched their flocks at night?

Class 3. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Sup't. What took place?

Class 4. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

The school and choir join in singing:

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around."

Sup't. What did the angel say?

Class 5. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Sup't. What did the angel say was his cradle?

Class 6. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Sup't. What did the heavenly choir sing?

Class 7. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Singing:

"Hark! what mean those heavenly voices,
Sweetly sounding through the skies?
Lo! th' angelic host rejoices —
Heavenly hallelujahs rise."

Sup't. Who was this babe?

Class 8. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

Sup't. What had been done by him?

Class 9. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Sup't. For what purpose did he come to earth?

Class 10. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Sup't. Whom did he come to save?

Class 11. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Sup't. Why did he become so poor?

Class 12. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Sup't. Why did God let his Son die?

Class 13. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Sup't. What did John say of him?

Class 14. Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!

Sup't. What will he do for those who receive him?

Class 15. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Sup't. What must I do to be saved?

Class 16. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sup't. Will he save all that come to him?

Class 17. And he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Sup't. When shall we come?

Class 18. Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.

Sing:

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning," etc.

Sup't. Has he invited me?

Class 19. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Sup't. Is the invitation meant for all?

Class 20. Let him that is athirst come. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Sing:

"We are coming, blessed Saviour."

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In any case where money has been sent, and the date has not been changed to correspond, we will be glad to be notified, and the mistake will be corrected.

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